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Maintaining and Enhancing a Complete Learning Community: A Vision for the University of Maine

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MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING A
COMPLETE LEARNING COMMUNITY:

A Vision for the University of Maine



PRESENTED BY
Frederick E. Hutchinson, *President*

May 3, 1994

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A Vision for the University of Maine

INTRODUCTION

The University of Maine is the state's center of learning, discovery, and service to the public. More than any other educational institution in the state, it has three broad, interrelated, and mandated responsibilities: 1) to provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate educational opportunities to qualified students; 2) to conduct basic and applied research, to undertake scholarly activities, and to pursue creative endeavors for the benefit of society and to expand the world's body of knowledge; and 3) to provide outreach services to Maine people in order to share the knowledge discovered and amassed at the University with others who might benefit from it.

With so many institutional responsibilities, it is essential that the University community periodically assess its focus and direction. On January 21, 1993, I spoke about the need to reassess as the theme of my Inaugural Address. My initial response to that need came in the form of the *Preliminary Downsizing Proposal*, released on April 15, 1993. That proposal, subsequently amended and implemented with a three-year timetable, was intended to bring fiscal stability to the University at a time when the institution faced serious (and possibly additional) financial and programmatic weaknesses. Because of the immediacy of the problem, the Downsizing Proposal was developed within the University's central administration. It was not intended to be a blueprint for the future; rather, the objective was to reestablish a more realistic financial base while also mandating future programmatic and structural modifications.

This document continues the process of redefining the University of Maine by presenting *my own* vision for the University's future. It attempts to speak to many audiences, including those who know and understand the University of Maine's mission as well as those who might not. This vision statement is the result of extensive discussion among the Vice Presidents and me, shaped in large part by the University's own mission statement; conversations with members and friends of the University community, including those taking place during my 44 campuswide "town meetings"; the Downsizing Proposal; and the University of Maine System Board of Trustees' *Project 2002* report, which clearly reaffirms this institution's role and responsibilities as the System's flagship campus.

One important point must be made clear to the reader: *This is not an "action plan" or "reallocation plan."* Those efforts, though essential, cannot and should not be undertaken in the absence of a shared understanding within the University community of what the University of Maine is and

The vision statement stresses four overarching themes: 1) the University as a complete learning community; 2) the need for a more student-centered orientation; 3) a healthy, diverse learning environment; and 4) our tripartite mission.

strives to be. *Rather, the document presents a general direction for the University which is needed to frame the next stage of the evaluation process: planning the specific goals and strategies necessary to achieve our vision, including the reallocation of resources to maintain and enhance the quality of programs and services.*

The vision statement stresses four overarching themes to frame the University's future direction: 1) the existence and value of the University of Maine as *a complete learning community*, which supports and inspires the faculty, staff, and learners of all kinds; 2) the importance and value of *a student-centered University orientation*, one where the needs of and benefits to the student body — and others who turn to the University for learning opportunities — are seen as interrelated parts of all teaching, research, and outreach activities; 3) the need for *a healthy, diverse learning environment* featuring quality students, faculty, staff, facilities and other resources; and 4) the philosophy with which the University community will fulfill *our tripartite mission within a "complete learning community" orientation.*

Refinement and fulfillment of this proposed direction will, and must, be done through a process involving all segments of the University community and its many diverse internal and external constituencies. To gain feedback, forums and meetings will be held throughout the remainder of this calendar year to discuss this vision statement's intent, details, strengths, and weaknesses.

Once the review process is concluded, the vision statement will be modified and finalized. From there, it will be incumbent on all members of the University to work toward developing and implementing the strategies deemed appropriate to realize a shared view of our University.

But for now, this is *one* vision — not *the* vision — of the University's future. The document attempts to initiate a broad dialogue, one which focuses on and interprets the University's mission so that we may maintain or enhance the quality and completeness of the University learning community, doing so while operating within the means available to us. This is the second stage in refining and reorienting the University of Maine. It requires — and I invite — public scrutiny and response.

Frederick E. Hutchinson

Frederick E. Hutchinson

May 3, 1994

Maintaining and Enhancing a Complete Learning Community: *A Vision for the University of Maine*

I. MAINTAINING A COMPLETE LEARNING COMMUNITY

The University of Maine is a complete learning community. Under our definition, a *complete learning community* is one where all activities, responsibilities, and opportunities are interrelated; where the quality and nature of one aspect of the community is affected by the quality and nature of other aspects; where *the quality of learning is largely determined by the overall experience of being a part of the community*.

Used here, *learning* is not a term reserved exclusively for those enrolled in a course or degree program. Interrelated learning opportunities are available to all members and potential members of the University community, whether they do their learning in a classroom, office, laboratory, or library, or at the arts center, residence halls, Memorial Union, an athletics facility, or an Extension field office.

The learning opportunities available at and through the University of Maine serve many communities, groups, and individuals, including, but not limited to:

- the University community, including students, their families, faculty, and staff
- prospective students and their families and friends
- Maine's primary and secondary schools
- the external education community, including other post-secondary institutions
- alumni/ae
- taxpayers
- government
- business and industry
- clients of programs and services
- patrons of cultural, informational, and recreational events and activities
- private foundations
- the region's diverse cultural communities
- other individuals concerned about the quality and availability of University programs, services and opportunities

These groups we serve individually and collectively expect the University, as a public institution, to respond to a wide range of needs and interests. Ideally, each constituent group views the University of Maine as a place where knowledge is developed and shared, and where facilities exist so that creativity can be explored or experienced.

Like other public research universities, the University of Maine's learning community is multi-faceted. It is a mosaic of teaching, scholarship, research, and creative achievement created by all members of the community: students, faculty, staff, and others who visit and utilize the University for assistance, intellectual

stimulation, and personal enhancement. The University's qualities as a complete learning community cannot be separated from one another; each influences and impacts, to some degree, the qualities of the others. They are — or at least they should be — inextricably linked.

Among the state of Maine's institutions of higher learning, the University of Maine offers the greatest breadth and level of opportunities. This is not to diminish the value and accomplishments of other institutions; it simply recognizes the nature of this and most other public research institutions and the qualities that distinguish them: the availability of Ph.D. programs and the many benefits of research related to those

The University's qualities as a complete learning community cannot be separated from one another; each influences and impacts, to some degree, the qualities of the others.

programs; the active work of faculty, graduate students and, to a lesser degree, undergraduate students in exploring and uncovering knowledge; the professional and graduate degrees available along with broad liberal education; the distinctive character of an undergraduate experience enriched by the research and scholarly environment; and the interaction among various colleges and disciplines. Together, these aspects of a University of Maine education add substantially to the richness, completeness, and distinctiveness of the institution's learning environment.

To maintain and enhance this complete learning community, and to satisfy the public's expectations, the University of Maine should strive to be:

- an education center which has high standards and strongly supports the goals and achievements of students, faculty, and staff
- an education center that is financially accessible to those it has a mandate to serve
- the institution offering the best undergraduate and graduate education in Maine and/or northern New England in the disciplines that the University offers
- the state's foremost resource for high-quality, wide-ranging research, scholarly, and outreach activities
- an institution praised for the technical, problem-solving, and communication skills possessed by its graduates
- a university renowned for caring for its students and their intellectual, personal, and career development
- an institution whose support for faculty and staff is openly acknowledged and respected by them
- an employer which places a high priority on workplace health and safety
- a state-supported entity with a reputation for its wise and prudent use of taxpayer support
- a public resource for sophisticated information technologies
- an institution that promotes a sense of individual worth and a sensitivity to cultural diversity

These are not lofty goals but firm expectations. Whether we have already achieved any or all of these objectives is not the issue; what does matter is that we constantly strive to fulfill these expectations. As members of the University community, we are committed to being responsive and accountable to those we serve. *Thus, the University of Maine community must make a conscious effort to examine its mission and its performance within the context of a shared understanding of the elements, activities, and responsibilities of a complete learning community.*

II. CREATING A STUDENT-CENTERED UNIVERSITY

The University of Maine strives to provide programs and services which, through a more student-centered approach, foster a dynamic learning environment, both in and out of the classroom. The University works to provide broad and varied learning opportunities to its students with the intent of encouraging and enhancing total student development. Our objective is to enhance the overall educational experience to create a rich learning environment, one which respects individual differences and diversity while nurturing healthy educational, cultural, social, and interpersonal experiences.

A student-centered approach will often require a *change in orientation* and increased responsibility for every member of the University community. Each must examine his or her activities that are undertaken on behalf of the University to assess how well those activities promote or contribute to the education of students: those enrolled; those we serve through outreach programs; and those we hope to attract. Such an assessment—and adjustment, if necessary—are essential to the attraction and retention of students with high potential and motivation.

As part of this student-centered approach, the University also places additional expectations on its students. Students have the responsibility for becoming more active learners and more committed to their overall education. After all, students are key elements of this equation, too; without their commitment, the support system put in place to benefit them cannot function effectively.

A student-centered approach — and the responsibilities that are part of it — must be a practice and attitude present in all areas of learning; it must be just as important in the services and extracurricular activities of the University as it is in the classroom.

With a shift in emphasis toward a greater *learner* orientation, the University must adjust the services — and delivery of services — it provides to students. However, such an adjustment means more than simply treating students with greater respect or better quality services. It also means a reassessment of what students need and want, recognizing that institutions must look toward enhancing learning in the broadest sense of the word, such as through international, multicultural, interdisciplinary, and experiential opportunities.

A change in orientation will require both comprehensive examination as well as innovation, such as enhanced student leadership opportunities; technological upgrades to allow for student “on-line” registration and assistance; an examination of administrative business hours to accommodate a more diverse student population; and greater integration of the student into the research, outreach, and mentoring activities of faculty and staff. These and other approaches must be determined through an inclusive process involving all members of the University community.

Several factors, including market forces, are encouraging higher education to reexamine the traditional ways of doing business. For the University of Maine, though, the motivating force that moves us is our quest for enhanced quality. If we expect our students to strive to be their best, we must treat them accordingly. Every office, every service, every program, and every person must operate with a student-centered orientation. Students need to know — and experience — that the University exists to serve them and to facilitate their learning and development.

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The Undergraduate Student Experience

The University of Maine sees the undergraduate experience as being central to all that the University does. None of the broadly-defined learning opportunities would or could exist without a strong, diverse, and high-quality core of undergraduate degree programs. *The University's mission, success, and future is predicated on the centrality of undergraduate education.*

Undergraduate education is the glue that bonds and maintains the institution. All other programs build upon this foundation. Our research and outreach missions — both mandated by our land-grant designation — benefit from the resources that are attracted and generated by the undergraduate program.

More than any other institution of higher learning in the state, the University of Maine offers undergraduates a set of educational opportunities which is distinctive in its breadth and depth.

Conversely, the quality and breadth of undergraduate education is enhanced considerably by the very fact that the University of Maine is a land-grant institution with a tripartite mission of teaching, research, and outreach. More than any other institution of higher learning in the state, the University of Maine offers undergraduates a set of educational opportunities which is distinctive in its breadth and depth:

- experienced faculty serve as teachers and mentors, who are actively involved in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors and who often are national and international experts in their fields
- close interactions with graduate students, who often are instructors, classmates, and role models
- diversity and depth of courses and programs, both at the general educational and advanced levels
- participation in the research process as undergraduate assistants or through other course-related projects and assignments
- exposure to innovative teaching modes, supported by the latest in informational technologies
- hands-on experience with state-of-the art research equipment and facilities
- access to a research library — in this case, the largest library in the state
- residence halls with programmatic and technological connections to the classroom
- opportunities for international educational experiences
- preparation for, and transition into, graduate and post-graduate education
- participation in the most culturally diverse community in the state

Because of these qualities, the University serves as *a complete learning community* in the broadest sense. This community offers undergraduates — and all learners, regardless of enrollment status — a multitude of intellectual and cultural challenges and opportunities. However, it is not enough to *offer* these resources: the University must *inspire* students to take advantage of all that is made available. Only then will they realize their full potential.

The Graduate Student Experience

Graduate education, especially at the doctoral level, distinguishes the University of Maine within the state. For many Maine students, the University offers the broadest, most affordable opportunity to pursue advanced degrees in specific and interdisciplinary programs of study. For other students, the University serves as a magnet, attracting them from around the world because of their interest in working in fields of study with some of the most respected experts in their disciplines.

The University enhances the completeness of its learning community by actively recruiting high quality graduate students who contribute through their presence and accomplishments as students, teachers, and researchers. These recruitment activities provide important opportunities to address the severe underrepresentation of minorities and, in many programs, women in our graduate programs. The learning community is also enriched by the existence of graduate programs in professional areas, which improve the quality of public education and support a wide variety of activities in the public and private sectors.

At the University of Maine, graduate education and research are tightly linked; in many fields, quality in one area cannot be achieved without quality in another. The research of faculty and graduate students advances our knowledge base and enhances our instructional programs.

Graduate students study with active, experienced researchers, scholars, and creative artists, many of whom have national or international reputations in their fields of expertise. These faculty members guide the graduate student through a formal program of study but also serve as mentors, involving and assisting graduate students in the creation of knowledge and the expression of ideas. The healthy relationship between the student and the faculty member is an important part of perpetuating and broadening the world's community of scholars.

In keeping with its mission, the University should increase the number of graduate students in specific fields, consistent with institutional needs and priorities. The variety and nature of our graduate programs distinguish us within the state and, in several disciplines, beyond those borders. The talents of graduate students contribute significantly to our teaching, research, and service missions as well as to the overall learning environment.

Funding for increasing the number of — and financial support for — graduate assistantships is a critical issue across campus and should be addressed in the way most supportive to the students and the programs. Such support would benefit research and teaching across disciplines and potentially would increase the opportunity for interaction with undergraduates in scholarship and in research.

In recognition of the need for, and value of, interdisciplinary approaches to problems and issues, *it is important that our graduate curriculum expand the availability of experiences and courses of study in cross-disciplinary fields and offer global opportunities for learning.* A complete learning community cannot fulfill its potential if its members narrowly confine their activities only to a specific major or feel constrained by geographic boundaries.

Despite the value of graduate education, the distinctiveness it confers on the University of Maine, and the need for more graduate student opportunities in certain disciplines, *further development of graduate programs*

High quality graduate students contribute to a more complete learning community through their presence and accomplishments as students, teachers, and researchers.

must remain selective and focused on those areas of greatest research strength, competitive advantage, and demand. Not all disciplines at the University should be expected to offer graduate programs. Not all graduate programs should offer doctorates. However, opportunities for involvement in graduate education can and should be provided whenever possible through interdisciplinary activities and creative, cooperative faculty efforts. These opportunities should also ensure quality mentoring of graduate students to facilitate the development of functional communities of scholars.

The presence of graduate education opportunities at the University of Maine deserves to be widely and highly regarded and utilized. The faculty and students involved in those programs influence the ideas, concepts, and responses critical to problem-solving in business, industry, government, and in private lives. Graduate education contributes greatly to the economic, environmental, cultural, and intellectual capacities and understanding of the state and beyond.

Fostering Life Skills and Values

To achieve our purpose of developing balanced, capable, and competent learners, *faculty and staff must collaboratively focus increased attention on developing and encouraging our students' life skills and values.* Certain skills and values derive primarily from instruction in the classroom and laboratories. Others come from out-of-classroom experiences. All are basic to the ability to survive and succeed in our world. As an institution founded for, and dedicated to, the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, the University needs to provide broad learning opportunities that can help its students (both undergraduate and graduate) to succeed and contribute to society.

Students, in turn, can share and apply their knowledge, skills, and values both within and outside the educational community. At the culmination of the college experience, students should have attained the confidence and competence to enter a diverse working world that relies increasingly on community, information, technology, and teamwork to achieve productive results.

In a learning environment such as ours, students — and those who support and work with them — should be exposed to, and obtain, significant knowledge in many important areas. Well-prepared students become creative thinkers who make decisions, solve problems, and visualize solutions. They know how to learn, and possess a sincere interest in learning and applying analytic skills and deductive reasoning to manage complex problems.

In terms of personal identity and development, well-balanced students accept responsibility for themselves and also respect and care for others. They are confident and empowered with a strong sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. These students are also social individuals who are assertive self-managers and effective communicators. High standards of integrity and honesty consistently guide their behavior and actions.

As a University community dedicated to serving students, our objective is to encourage and to assist *all* students in developing the following life skills and values:

- *Critical thinking* — the ability to generate new ideas to solve social and academic problems; to make reasoned, logical decisions based on an evaluation of alternatives and risks; to solve problems to adequately serve the needs of individuals, groups and the larger community.
- *Knowing how to learn* — the use of efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills; recognition of the value of life-long learning.
- *Effective communication* — oral and written communication proficiency; the ability to interpret and respond to verbal and nonverbal cues in personal, academic, and professional contexts; the ability to express a broad range of human emotions in appropriate and constructive ways.
- *Multicultural and global perspective* — the appreciation, recognition, and respect for the views and traditions of other cultures, embracing these differences in the community to promote understanding; recognition of the connection of one's education to larger societal and world issues, with the ability to apply this knowledge when interacting with people from diverse backgrounds.
- *Respect for individuality* — the recognition that every person is unique, and respect for the fact that people may have different tastes, interests, perspectives, opinions, and ways of expressing themselves.
- *Sociability* — the demonstration of understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy and respect for others in group settings.
- *Civic and individual responsibility* — active involvement in the community, with a recognition of individual and group responsibilities; perseverance toward achieving goals.
- *Self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy* — a belief in one's own self-worth, competence, and the capacity to effect change; the accurate assessment of self, the setting of personal goals and progress; self-control.
- *Leadership* — the ability to motivate others to action directed toward a shared purpose; the ability to create a climate in which followers are empowered to participate in a shared vision.

As a University community dedicated to serving students, our objective is to encourage and to assist all students in developing important life skills and values.

With these life skills and values, students are prepared for a lifetime of learning and challenges. Furthermore, these attributes reflect the characteristics that employers frequently look for when evaluating candidates for employment. *As an institution which plays a significant role in its students' intellectual and personal betterment, the University should encourage the development of these qualities in its students. Furthermore, it should provide a learning environment that allows for such development.*

III. ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment, as defined here, consists of the University's intellectual, physical, and technical condition and atmosphere. Such an environment reflects the complex infrastructure the University must maintain and the rich community and values it must foster. The environment in which our students, faculty, and staff learn and contribute to learning must be healthy and conducive to those endeavors. Such an environment must offer the facilities, support services, and respect one should expect in light of the University's tripartite mission of teaching, research, and outreach. The environment must also be conducive to a student's ability to acquire certain life skills and values, which, as noted previously, are an important part of this vision statement.

The Nature of the Learning Environment

Programs focusing on alternative classroom learning opportunities enrich and integrate theoretical and practical learning and contribute to the development of the individual student. In this spirit, the University will attempt to expand such career and job opportunities for students by creating more internships; developing more permanent placement opportunities at the end of the college experience; increasing ties with the business

community for this and other purposes; cultivating development opportunities for area industries; enhancing the community service offerings for students; and improving the technological capabilities that can enhance and advance these objectives.

The quality and nature of the learning environment are of equal importance to faculty, staff, and students.

The quality and nature of the learning environment are of equal importance to faculty, staff, and students. *Regardless of position or title, all employees deserve and desire to work in an environment where they are treated with respect and civility, and*

where opportunities for promotion or professional growth and development exist. The ways the University supports and encourages professional development (both through specific opportunities as well as tenure and promotion mechanisms) require constant attention and, when appropriate, review and modification to ensure they provide incentives and rewards that inspire and motivate.

Students, faculty, and staff should feel confident that they work in an environment where their ideas, thoughts, and suggestions are encouraged and respected. Initiatives such as the seminars on ethics; the "Risky Business" series of workshops which focus on teaching and learning styles; the creation of a Native American program; the class book project; and creative applications of multi-media, distance education, and other technologies all have developed from within the campus community. *It is imperative that the University of Maine provides an atmosphere that is conducive to, recognizes, and rewards innovative responses to institutional needs and opportunities.* To ensure this, organizational communication processes must be flexible, dynamic, open, and must cut across institutional units and artificial classification of University community membership.

The value of a University of Maine education is reflected in the nature of those who earn it. As an institution, *the University must always seek students with both the potential and motivation to succeed.* We continue to pursue ways to enhance the quality of the student body and also identify ways to gauge our success. We are also committed to reducing the size of the student body as outlined in the Downsizing Plan in order to maximize learning opportunities within the limitations of our facilities and other resources.

A high priority of the University's efforts to maintain and to enhance the learning community is educating students to recognize the diverse traditions and perspectives of other cultures as well as their own. We are, in fact, living in what McLuhan labeled a "global village," a fast-changing, diverse world brought together through technology, similarities, and differences. It is imperative that all members of the University community — students, faculty, staff, supporters, and guests — be able to engage in the different perspectives that co-exist within the world communities in which we might participate. *The University of Maine must foster a pluralistic environment where differing experiences and perspectives exist and where differences are respected, even if not personally shared or accepted.* We must enhance the quality of the student body by broadening the University's overall diversity, especially, in the numbers of Native Americans, Franco-Americans, women, and other underrepresented groups among our students, faculty and staff.

The University's learning environment should also be hospitable to international programs, both those taking place on-campus as well as cooperative agreements with other institutions and countries. The international component of the University of Maine provides a vital educational opportunity for students; in addition, it also provides a valuable link to global markets and resources for businesses and agencies. Like so many other areas addressed in this document, our international programs bridge disciplines, activities, and cultures valued and present at the University.

Opportunities for enhancing the University's learning environment can be encouraged through increasing collaborative programs and activities in places where students reside, including on-campus residence halls and Greek living units. This may be accomplished by increasing the number of living/learning opportunities in on-campus residences through greater formal programming efforts involving faculty. Access to these and similar opportunities must be sought on behalf of non-traditional and other off-campus students as well. *In these and other areas, active involvement of faculty and staff is critical to the full development of a complete learning community.*

Recreational sports, intercollegiate athletics, and other extracurricular activities are important elements of a complete learning community. They provide a healthy balance to the rigors of the classroom, lab, and office for thousands of people within the University community. Furthermore, these activities provide out-of-class opportunities for students to experience and practice many of the life skills and values that the University sees as essential to one's education and growth: most notably, teamwork; self-discipline; problem-solving; leadership; and self-respect and respect for others. *Those involved in instruction, advising, or coaching should always use their contact with students to reinforce the primary mission of the University as an academic institution and to relate the lessons of competition and participation to the lessons and values of life.*

As in any community, the health and well-being of its members should be of concern to all. These issues are closely related to academic and professional success, personal development, and, at the University, student and employee retention. Students and parents expect the University to provide effective, accessible, broad-based, economical health services, and those expectations are increasing. Faculty and staff expect their employer to make the same available for them. *It is important for us to emphasize prevention, education, and treatment in order to meet the health care needs of all members of the University community.*

The University of Maine must foster a pluralistic environment where differing experiences and perspectives exist and where differences are respected.

Support for the Learning Environment

Maintaining an inspiring, resourceful learning environment requires an on-going institutional commitment to planning, upgrading, and advocacy. Our students, faculty, and staff need adequate levels of financial and technical support in order to achieve the levels of accomplishment expected of them.

The quality of our facilities and their maintenance is a high priority and shall be addressed through reasoned planning and allocation of resources. Our classrooms, laboratories, and other working spaces need to be evaluated and upgraded when appropriate to maintain their quality and to maximize their utility, comfort, and productivity.

Our students, faculty, and staff need adequate levels of financial and technical support in order to achieve the levels of accomplishment expected of them.

Two important facilities which are symbolic and central to the notion of the *University-as-community*, Fogler Library and the Memorial Union, need expansion to handle the demand and need for out-of-class learning opportunities. At a time when one of the University's goals is to increase faculty and staff interaction with students, the shortage of quality space for this and other purposes is especially conspicuous. The University must be attentive to these areas as part of the institution's commitment to improving its learning community and working environment.

Technological advancements that improve the quality of — and accessibility to — the learning environment must be actively pursued. Such technologies should enable students, faculty, staff, and others to use (and afford to access) the many diverse learning opportunities available at and through the University. Information technologies will greatly expand the University's ability to fulfill its teaching, research, and public service missions; however, all investment in new technologies should be undertaken prudently to maximize the benefits and to satisfy specific University priorities and needs.

Technical support and training must also be available to all members of the community so that activities are conducted with the maximum of efficiency and effectiveness. Our students need appropriate exposure to and involvement with sophisticated technologies so that they are sufficiently prepared for the professional- and life-challenges ahead of them. To satisfy these institutional needs, *creative and collaborative means are needed to acquire and utilize state-of-the art technologies for the enhancement and enrichment of our educational, research, and outreach efforts.*

University administrators have the responsibility to work diligently with others within the institution to control growth and manage resources. The University experienced a disproportionate expansion of programs vis-a-vis resources during the past 20 years, creating an extraordinary demand for resources that could not be maintained. All members of the University community need to recognize the potential for that phenomenon to reoccur and to exercise restraint. *Without restraint, we will not realize the Downsizing-related cost-savings needed for reallocation to priority areas, which has been the institution's objective since January 1993.*

The University's central administration also bears primary responsibility for advocating sufficient funding levels for the programmatic needs and priorities of the University, consistent with state and federal mandates and directives. Such advocacy must recognize the value of — and need for — attracting, retaining, and rewarding experienced faculty, staff, and students, as well as the principle of accessibility, which is fundamental to the purposes of a public land-grant institution. Though all within the University community share these

responsibilities to differing degrees, the central administration has the foremost obligation to ensure that institutional advocacy is focused, coordinated, and pursued.

Part of that advocacy effort involves the University's relations with its many external constituencies. Among these are the institution's alumni/ae, friends, corporations, and foundations whose enthusiasm, involvement, and generosity provide strength to the programs, services, and features of our complete learning community. The University will continue an assertive program to build the endowment which facilitates the acquisition of quality faculty; makes accessible educational opportunities for students; attracts talented students; and provides supplemental support for research and scholarly work. These resources, provided by individuals, corporations, and foundations, directly enhance the learning environment. *Such external support must be aggressively sought.*

IV. FULFILLING OUR LAND-GRANT MISSIONS

WITHIN A COMPLETE LEARNING COMMUNITY ORIENTATION

The University of Maine's tripartite responsibilities of teaching, research, and outreach must be interrelated and complementary to satisfy the expectations of *a complete learning community*. As an institution with a fundamental mission to impart knowledge, the University must offer the expertise, facilities, atmosphere, and opportunities required to give motivated individuals the chance to achieve their aspirations. Those conditions should exist at any quality institution of higher learning. *What distinguishes the University of Maine from many other institutions is its commitment to an operating philosophy which stresses the value of mutuality among its three basic missions.*

Teaching

No University activity exceeds the importance of teaching.

If the undergraduate experience is to remain central to the University's fulfillment of its mission, we must pursue ways to support teaching and to ensure that teaching excellence is recognized in the promotion and tenure process. This does not mean less commitment to scholarship; instead, it stresses the interrelatedness of teaching and research so that what takes place in the lab, library, or studio is linked with the classroom and effectively taught. The University needs to stress that integrating teaching, research and outreach is a desirable and effective way to fulfill its educational responsibilities.

Acknowledging the mutuality of teaching and scholarship, we must strive to create a University in which all faculty are active scholars, scientists, or creative artists in their respective fields. Good teachers develop or uncover knowledge as well as share it. Teaching is a critical means by which a researcher, scholar, or creative artist advances and expands the body of knowledge, for it is in the classroom, laboratory, library, stage, or field that knowledge gets passed on to others. In turn, those recipients will apply and/or expand that body of knowledge further.

No University activity exceeds the importance of teaching.

The nature of teaching is changing, and so must we adjust. New technologies and methodologies have expanded, and will continue to expand, the ways knowledge can be shared. We will encourage and support our faculty's efforts to adopt them. Creative pedagogies have refined the learning process. Faculty must be supported in their efforts to learn these pedagogies; the administration will strive to provide the resources necessary to support those activities.

We must identify the appropriate function of graduate students in undergraduate instruction. Graduate teaching assistants should be given formal training in teaching methods and approaches so that they enter the classroom properly trained to communicate and teach. It is important that the University clearly articulates and

supports appropriate roles for graduate teaching assistants in recognition of the contributions they bring to the undergraduate experience. Furthermore, the University should recognize the graduate teaching assistants' needs as apprentices in their profession to have limited teaching responsibilities.

Faculty must be supported in their efforts to learn the new pedagogies; the administration will strive to provide the resources necessary to support those activities.

Our teaching activities must also recognize the need for healthy interaction between students and faculty members. *In a complete learning community, the role of the teacher does not end at the dismissal of class.* Teachers have been, and must continue to be, mentors, advisors, and role models. All who accept the title of

educator must be willing to encourage and support the learning activities of those who turn to them for knowledge and guidance. University administrators have a duty to recognize and reward these efforts.

Research, Scholarship, and Other Creative Activities

The University of Maine is a public research university. Since its inception, the University has been expected to assemble and encourage scientists, scholars, and creative artists in a wide array of fields and disciplines to create and expand knowledge and ideas. *The University is fully committed to quality research programs as it carries out its mandate to be the state's research and doctoral degree-granting institution.*

At the University of Maine, the term *research* means more than collecting, investigating, or experimentation; it refers to a set of scholarly or creative activities aimed at advancing and expanding our understanding of ourselves, our environment, and our modes of expression. Our research programs can be measured in a number of ways: the quality and quantity of books, articles, works of art, performances, and presentations, which enhance the reputation of the institution and the faculty members responsible; success in competing for external funding, which is one way of gauging an institution's national and international research reputation in those fields where significant levels of external funding opportunities exist; the existence of research resources like libraries, computers, research assistants and support staff; and the quality of work space and equipment.

The research activity taking place at the University will continue to include both basic and applied. Furthermore, our research activity will continue to have state, national and international importance, though understandably the level of importance and involvement will differ among the many diverse research areas. *We should strive for excellence in all research areas but should also consider the potentiality, appropriateness, and affordability of a research opportunity when prioritizing our research investments.*

The University maintains its role of conducting research in part to develop and advance society's ability to resolve problems, whether they are of a short-term or long-term nature. In accepting this responsibility, the University research community must articulate the benefits of research. Research is an initial step in fulfilling the outreach mission of the University, as so much of the research conducted at the University is adapted for economic application or scholarly elaboration. The constituencies of the University depend on it to actively disseminate the findings and fruits of its labors so that those may be utilized or pursued further.

Scholarly and creative endeavors should also be encouraged across the University. While much of our research is laboratory-based, scholarship and creative achievement in the arts, humanities, and other areas are highly important to the curriculum of the University and the performance and reputation of its faculty. In these areas the University has made its mark and will continue to do so.

The University continues to increase annually the amount of external funding for research and sponsored activities through grants and contracts. This direction recognizes the public- and private-sectors' dependence on research universities for scientific and scholarly pursuit and our faculty's national competitiveness. External support also provides significant educational advantages for students and others involved in the research process. *Additional external funding will be sought aggressively — and selectively — so that the University's research commitments (projects and personnel) remain manageable.* Pursuit of externally-funded programs and projects must be determined by the need for and relative benefits of such programs and projects.

Though graduate students traditionally experience greater involvement in faculty research endeavors, *the University should pursue ways in which the undergraduate experience may be enriched through exposure and involvement in the scholarly pursuits of faculty members.* This involvement is not limited to scientific research but includes other forms of scholarship and creative efforts undertaken by the University's teaching and research faculty. Working as part of a scholarly endeavor, students will realize more effectively the attributes and benefits of a complete learning community.

Finally, the University should continue to encourage *interdisciplinary* research programs and scholarly activities. The University has distinguished itself, and can continue to do so, through the highly respected centers and institutes it features, bringing together University scholars and scientists to collaborate on important questions and challenges. *Interdisciplinary collaboration can be especially beneficial and resourceful in expanding the University's research goals as well as its support for businesses, industries, government, and others.*

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Outreach

Like other land-grant and sea-grant institutions with distinct missions and relationships with the public, the University of Maine's outreach activity has to be a two-step process. Not only must we disseminate information and skills to the people of Maine and beyond in fulfillment of our mission, we must also work diligently to identify the needs and aspirations of the people of Maine in order to serve them effectively. The University regards its responsibilities to serve the people of Maine as a valued trust between the state's citizens and the University's faculty and staff. *We need to be partners in the work that the communities we serve regard as crucial.*

To establish a sense of direction for the University's outreach mission, it is important to place it in the context of the many ways we fulfill our public service responsibilities. Most people think of Cooperative Extension when they think of the University's outreach activities. However, other formalized public service units also contribute to the University's education-related transfer of research and other information. To be of

maximum benefit to the people of Maine, all public service units must maintain a higher public profile — not for public relations purposes, but to raise public awareness, and therefore, to enhance the units' benefit to the public, as directed by the University's outreach mission.

Beyond the public service units, the University fulfills its outreach mission in several ways, such as when faculty apply their scholarship to developing a particular area of knowledge and/or the quality of life in Maine; or when a staff member, acting on behalf of the institution, provides a program, service, or some

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other form of assistance to others. Students, too, extend the institution's outreach mission through public service efforts: some self- or peer-initiated, others inspired by the activities of teachers and other University personnel. No matter what the title, role, or responsibility, each member of the University community shares in the University's outreach responsibilities.

Technology transfer is yet another important part of our outreach activity. Through it we contribute to the economic growth of the state and respond to Maine's industry needs. Whether it is the potential environmental and economic benefits of timber bridges or the discovery of a new utilization for a food byproduct, the meaning or value of the activity needs to be communicated beyond the pages of a scholarly journal. *Advances in research and development must be effectively disseminated to potential users in order to satisfy the outreach expectations.* We must examine all of our communication vehicles and resources to see if they are being used effectively and efficiently.

Furthermore, our outreach activities go beyond specific programs and services. They include making resources such as Fogler Library available to anyone who is interested. They also include the sharing of visual and performing arts at our museums, theaters, and lecture halls. Our outreach activities also include the social and recreational opportunities provided to the University community and beyond through our participatory and spectator athletics programs and events.

However, the most important University outreach activity is that of educating citizens who in turn share and apply the knowledge, skills and values acquired at, or through, the University. Whether the activity takes place in a

classroom, county Extension office, or marine science laboratory, imparting knowledge to all learners — both on- and off-campus — is the most significant outreach activity undertaken by the University. These students become the “educators” in their workplaces, homes, and communities, demonstrating the knowledge they gained from the University of Maine in a wide variety of situations and venues, thus enhancing the quality of Maine’s economy and ways of life. *For faculty, staff, students, and administrators, this aspect of the University’s public service/outreach activity is both a result of, and the basis for, all of our collective and individual endeavors.*

Outreach has been called an operational consequence of being a public land-grant institution. As with our teaching and research missions, outreach cannot be approached in an isolated manner. All three are interrelated. Each is dependent on how well we perform the other two.

CONCLUSION

The University of Maine is one of the largest institutions of any kind in the state, featuring distinctive missions, resources, attributes, and needs. Hundreds of thousands of people have been educated here; over time, hundreds of thousands more will be. It is incumbent upon us to remain focused on our tripartite mission; to communicate what we do and can do, and why we do it; to adjust to fluctuating economic, technological, and social conditions; and to anticipate and help identify changes in demand for the programs, services and opportunities we provide.

As outlined in this vision statement, our response to the above-stated responsibilities should be undertaken in the context of a student-centered institution, one existing within a complete learning community. Under our definition, a complete learning community is one where all activities, responsibilities, and opportunities are interrelated; where the quality and nature of one aspect is affected by the quality and nature of other aspects; where *the quality of learning is largely determined by the overall experience of being part of the community.*

A complete learning community is one where the quality of learning is largely determined by the overall experience of being part of the community.

Three additional themes are stressed in this document. To buttress the complete learning community concept, the University needs an institution-wide commitment to a student-centered orientation, where all programs, services, and activities are designed to support the needs of all learners — those formally enrolled in classes and those whose learning experience comes from the research, outreach, programs, activities, and support services provided by the University. Through these diverse learning experiences, the University intends to inspire an appreciation for, and adoption of, basic life skills and values which are essential to a person’s growth and development.

The third theme emphasized in the document is the maintenance and enhancement of the learning environment’s health, diversity, and condition so that all who study, work, and visit the University will be able to maximize the multiple learning opportunities it provides.

Finally, the fourth theme addresses the University's tripartite mission, and the ways faculty, students, staff, administrators, and supporters should assess our mission and direction within the context of a student-centered, complete-learning-community orientation.

As expressed in this vision, we can best fulfill our mission and prepare for the future by agreeing, as a community, to a *shared understanding* of our tripartite mission within this orientation. Once that objective is accomplished, the next phase is the development of a comprehensive plan for maintaining and enhancing the University's quality, including the reallocation of resources where appropriate.

Though the vision is presented through four major themes, several different subthemes are woven throughout the document — some stated more explicitly than others:

- Though we offer broad programs and services, undergraduate education is central to all University responsibilities.
- Graduate education distinguishes the University within Maine and helps fulfill the institution's teaching, scholarly, and public service activities.
- Interdisciplinary activities — especially at the graduate levels — can offer creative and exceptional educational and research opportunities while at the same time alleviating the need for formal, specialized programs in certain areas or disciplines.
- Because of the University's significant role in preparing students for the future, we have a responsibility to articulate and teach specific life skills and values that students will need both during and after their days at UMaine.
- Students have both a stake and a role in the quality of the University and should encourage themselves and their peers to take advantage of the learning opportunities made available to them.
- Technical changes and investments can make the teaching, research, outreach, and support service activity of the University more efficient and successful.
- The learning community must be receptive to new ideas, sensitive to the need to care for its facilities and equipment, respectful of differences, and appreciative of differing world views.
- Though all University missions have importance, none exceeds the importance of teaching.
- Faculty should extend their mentoring and support for students beyond simply class-time interaction; the administration needs to find ways to reward such efforts.
- Scholarship and public service opportunities should be incorporated into the learning curriculum where appropriate and practical.
- Faculty and staff need support, recognition, and rewards for their efforts to enhance the student-centeredness and completeness of the learning community.
- All members of the University community have a responsibility to control and manage resources in a prudent, efficient, and effective manner.
- The central administration bears primary responsibility to advocate for sufficient funding and programmatic support for the University, and must be aggressive in securing private support.
- The University must be resourceful and creative in supporting efforts to fulfill its mandate as a valued public research university.

- For students to receive the full benefits of a complete learning community, the faculty they work with must be *active* researchers, scholars, and creative artists.
- The University's outreach activities must extend beyond the work of formal service units and instead involve all University community members in applying their talents to dealing with individual and broad challenges.
- The ultimate outreach activity of the University of Maine is the education of citizens who, in turn, share and apply what they learned from — or through — our faculty, staff, and students.

This is by no means an all-inclusive summary. However, the list attempts to capture the essence of the direction the University of Maine should take, contingent on general community agreement. Like the philosophy behind the complete learning community orientation, *the direction for the University presented in this document must be reviewed and considered in its entirety for its meaning and intent to be adequately conveyed.* If taken out of context, individual elements of the statement may mislead the reader and distort the direction which the author has attempted to present.

The final vision statement will effectively position the University for the future, and will underscore the institution's role as a highly valuable state resource.

This vision statement initiates a community-wide — indeed, a state-wide — dialogue among the many people affiliated with the University in one way or another. It seeks examination for the sake of identifying strengths and weaknesses, exploring strategies and tactics, and developing responses that can aid the University to achieve the qualities and stature we desire. It is anticipated that this process will carry the University through the end of the Fall 1994 semester. Anything less than that would be extraordinarily quick and likely inadequate, given the numbers of people and groups that need to have a voice in the University's future. Details of the review process need to be developed with the help of the elected or formal leaders of student, faculty, and staff organizations and associations. The process will be fair, inclusive, and thorough; it should not be done in haste.

This project, once complete, will be a tremendous accomplishment. The final vision statement will effectively position the University for the future, and will underscore the institution's role as a highly valuable state resource. The development and implementation of strategies cannot and will not succeed without the cooperation and collaboration of students, staff, faculty, and administrators. The degree to which we succeed will be measured not by those who prepare and implement the vision, but by those in a position to judge the quality and attributes of the people, programs, policies, and services that result from this endeavor.

